



In the Footsteps of St. Paul: The “Paulism” of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria

by Fr. Giovanni M. Scalese, CRSP

Zaccarian Spirituality Collection

vol. 4

**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL:
THE “PAULISM” OF
ST. ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA**

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Zaccarian Spirituality Collection

THE *COLLATIO*:

AN INSTRUMENT FOR PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL GROWTH

THREE-DAY RETREAT WITH ST. ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA

SAINT ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA AND LUKEWARMNESS

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL:

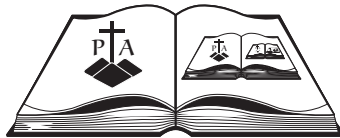
THE “PAULISM” OF ST. ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA

SAINT ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA: THE PAINTING THAT SAYS IT ALL

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Barnabite Publications

Zaccarian Spirituality Collection

Imprimi potest

Fr. Robert B. M. Kosek, CRSP, Provincial Superior
Bethlehem, PA, USA, June 29, 2015

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Compilers' Note

Cor Antonii, cor Pauli. “For Anthony Mary, following Christ meant walking also in the footsteps of the Apostle.” Our author, Rev. Fr. Giovanni Scalese, CRSP, develops this thought extensively.

Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria had an ardent devotion to the Apostle of the Gentiles, Paul of Tarsus. His life, as this article explains, is characterized by a Pauline spirit, and his writings distinctively marked with Pauline intuitions, such evidences that Paul was to him a patron, a model, and a guide.

As Anthony Mary's children, we, Barnabites, Angelics, and Laity of St. Paul, are urged to follow the same “master” in the accomplishment of our mission in the world. It is for us a serious challenge, for as we all know Paul was zealous in his love for Christ and neighbor even to the point of martyrdom.

The same challenge is posed to every determined follower of Christian ideal. For one who takes the Apostle Paul as his guide in the pursuit of this ideal, he must inevitably take his example and assimilate his personality. Our saint proved to have embodied Paul in his life. As Paul was pleased with such a faithful and fervent follower, he gave Anthony Mary the grace to see him in a vision before he took his last breath.

Father Scalese expounds in an informative way different testimonies and sources to confirm St. Anthony Mary's “Paulism.”

Cor Antonii, cor Pauli. “As we turn to our founder, we find Paul. When we find Paul, we will have found Christ.”

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Bethlehem, PA, USA – Rome, ITALY
May 27, 2015

Anniversary of the Canonization of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL: THE “PAULISM” of ST. ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA

This theme can be considered a classical one: there is no conference on St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria in which the “Paulism” of the saint is not discussed. This tradition started in 1933 with Cardinal Eugene Pacelli who, at the conclusion of the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation, gave the keynote speech in St. Charles Borromeo Church in Rome; it was entitled *The Apostolate of Anthony Mary Zaccaria: In the Footsteps of the Apostle of the Gentiles*. The same year, a special issue of the periodical *The Message of St. Paul* contained an article by Fr. Achilles Desbuquoit on *La parenté d'âme entre Paul et Zaccaria*. During the 1950s, the student Giuseppe Motta, under the guidance of Fr. Giuseppe Cagni, made a research on St. Anthony Mary's spiritual affiliation with the Apostle Paul, entitling it *Cor Antonii, cor Pauli*. Motta's research was published first in *Rivivere* and then in *Eco dei Barnabiti*, in two parts. The second part was published for the celebration of the 19th centennial anniversary of St. Paul's arrival in Rome. Next came Fr. Antonio Gentili, who wrote an article on this subject in his book *I Barnabiti*. Finally, Fr. Andrea Bonini spoke on this subject during the week of spirituality in La Mendola, on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the death of the holy founder. We also have, as a most valuable reference, Fr. Franco Ghilardotti's thesis entitled *The Barnabite Paulism: Ethical-Religious Aspects or The Lombard Evangelism of the 1500s*; unfortunately, this work was never published, but it was presented in the 1961 special issue of *Eco dei Barnabiti*.

What can we add to this subject, since the existing sources have already been widely studied? Father Mauro Espen, at the end of his recent thesis on Zaccaria's sermons, draws the following conclusion:

“The Paulism, which is usually attributed to Zaccaria, and which presents as its foundation a large reference to the *corpus paulinum*, should be confirmed with a biblical-theological analysis which would be a necessary preamble to establish the limits determining the Pauline character of St. Anthony Mary’s spirituality.” This task I will leave to further studies. For now, I have limited myself to gathering and organizing the works that have already been published and drawing from them new or more profound interpretations.

The study is divided into four parts: in the first part, we will consider the presence of St. Paul in the life of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria; in the second, we will investigate this presence in the writings of our founder; in the third, we will explore the origin of Zaccaria’s Paulism; in the fourth, we will ask, Which “Paul” was the reference point for Anthony Mary? We will then conclude with some relevant reflections.

Introduction: Most Faithful Follower of His Paul

I believe that Zaccaria was the first saint who dedicated his spirituality and foundations to St. Paul the Apostle. A series of observations will confirm this impression. Zaccaria’s institutes represent the first such instance, since male and female religious, as well as laypeople, were called *children of Paul*. This became a very common practice, as shown in the latest Pontifical Yearbook: About forty institutes of men are dedicated to a saint, four of them to St. Paul and six to St. Joseph. Similar institutes of women number about two hundred, of which four are dedicated to St. Paul and fifty to St. Joseph. Another noteworthy fact can be seen in the Roman liturgy, in which, I believe, Zaccaria is the only saint whose prayer contains the name of another saint, that is, St. Paul. This perhaps indicates that in this regard the Church considers Zaccaria unique among saints. Another observation relates to iconography. Our saint was often depicted,

especially in the oldest paintings, together with St. Paul. I counted about fifteen such examples in the collection of Fr. Boffito. This tendency is also rare, perhaps even unique. I will now offer the last observation from the first lines of Fr. Giuseppe Motta's work; it is an impression we cannot avoid: from Paul III to Pius XI and Pius XII, the pontifical documents that deal with the holy founder repeatedly emphasize the intimate relationship that bound the Apostle of the Gentiles to the Apostle of Lombardy.

Perhaps the oldest Pauline title attributed to Zaccaria is found in an inscription, described by Giuseppe Bresciani that must have once adorned a plaque or column in Cremona: *Pauli sui fidelissimus sectator* (most faithful follower of his Paul). That unique relationship between Anthony Mary and the Apostle is thrice expressed in this wonderfully concise phrase. First of all, it reminds us that Zaccaria was a *follower* of Paul. This idea has been incorporated into the present title as "in the footsteps of Paul." Next, we find that the saint was *faithful*—but this did not seem adequate, so instead he is *most faithful*. Finally, we have the most beautiful element in this expression: the word *his* added to the name Paul, as if the Apostle belonged in a special way to our founder.

I. Saint Paul in the Life of Anthony Mary Zaccaria

To be able to reconstruct the Pauline personality of our founder, we must address the witnesses: eyewitnesses (*de visu*), who had personal knowledge of Zaccaria, and witnesses "by ear" (*de auditu*), who collected the testimonies of the eyewitnesses.

1. The Witnesses

We can start with the statement by the Anonymous Angelic: "He was careful to be considered a fool by the world, since he was a true imitator of Christ Crucified and of St. Paul, toward whom he had

great devotion” (*Barnabite Documents*, 44). In a well-documented study by Fr. Giuseppe Cagni, Fr. Battista Soresina speaks more elaborately on this fact. Let us consider this eyewitness testimony: “He was a great devotee and imitator of St. Paul, the Apostle. He constantly had his Letters of St. Paul in his hands, experiencing great delight in reading them. He used to read them as if he were singing them. In writing his letters he used a style similar to that of St. Paul. His sermons were based on and shaped by the doctrine and sayings of the same Apostle. This is why before his death—as he himself said to Fr. Soresina while lying sick in bed—St. Paul appeared to him and asked him if he wished to go with him; the saint answered that he was willing, and so he died of that illness. He wanted to write about St. Paul, but his many occupations and his early death did not allow him to do so” (*Attestations*, 68).

The *Attestations* is the principal source used by all our historians from earlier centuries, first of all Bascapè: “He used to take the most fiery sayings from Paul.... When, as an exhortation, he used to write letters to his confreres or others, these seemed to have a certain Pauline efficacy. He gave great attention to the reading of St. Paul’s epistles. He found great pleasure in them, to the point that the confreres would hear him as if singing the words of Paul, such was his enthusiasm” (*De spiritualibus*, 7–8).

Father Giovanni Antonio Gabuzio is in agreement, though he writes in a more elaborate style rich with biblical quotations: “In his sermons to the people, where he seemed to be flooded with ideas, he was so ardent and effective that he seemed to lead the souls wherever he wished, giving rise to extraordinary fruits of piety. Indeed, he did not preach about himself, but Christ (2 Cor 4:5), not with persuasive discourses of wisdom, or with sublime words, but with a language taught by the Spirit (1 Cor 2:1, 4, 13). He would draw sentences, rich with divine wisdom, especially from the epistles of St. Paul. In fact,

he had a most extraordinary interest in these epistles, and he found great delight in them. And so it happened that in writing letters to his confreres or to others, to exhort them, which he did often, he seemed to have some kind of apostolic spirit” (*Historia*, 78–79). The testimony given by Fr. Innocenzo Chiesa is also quite moving: “In his sermons he had handy the most beautiful and important sentences of St. Paul, whose epistles were for him a continuous lesson, and he pronounced their words with a certain energy and voice modulation, giving, in his mind, the effect which he thought the Apostle had in writing them” (*Depositio*, 77).

Father Anacleto Secco is in accord with the historians who preceded him: “The way of life of this angelic man was the following: pay great attention to the epistles of the divine Paul, and find an extraordinary delight in them, so that because of his enthusiasm his companions used to hear him sing those words of Paul” (*Synopsis*, 162). Previously, Secco had said, “Having chosen the divine Apostle Paul, not only as patron and guide, but also as model, not only had he started to make recourse to his paternal protection and his friendly help, but he also tried to secure from him inspiration for virtue, examples of honesty, the same words most useful to incite souls” (*Ibid.*, 21).

Father Agostino Torielli relates the following about the preaching of Zaccaria: “On feast days, Father Anthony Mary would give a lesson on the epistles of St. Paul to the many laypeople that used to come to listen to him” (*De Principiis*, 6–7). An example of a Pauline preaching by our saint is found in his speech of October 4, 1534, reported by Gabuzio and then by Secco. It is essentially a commentary on a Pauline text (1 Cor 4:10) based on a series of Scripture quotations, especially from Paul, which refer to the tribulations of human life—a kind of *lectio divina* on St. Paul.

2. Later Contributions

The most recent historical research has ascertained that Zaccaria's Pauline devotion preceded the foundation of the Barnabites and of the Angelics. Gaetano Bugati discovered a document, drawn by the notary Giuseppe Fellini on September 5, 1543, that contains a reference to the last will made by Zaccaria in 1531. In this will, Anthony Mary provided for the chapel built by his family in the church of St. Donato. It was to be dedicated to the Conversion of St. Paul, with an annual revenue of 75 imperial lire and an obligation to celebrate Mass on every holy day of obligation, on the Feast of St. Donato, and on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. The first chaplain of the chapel was Don Giovanni Maria Gaffuri, to be followed by one chosen by the saint's cousin Bernardo or by the oldest of his descendants, or the oldest of the Zaccarian clan.

3. The "Vision of St. Paul" before His Death

We find St. Paul also at the end of our founder's life. Soresina recorded that shortly before Zaccaria died, the Apostle appeared to him, inviting him to go with him to heaven, and the Father answered, "Willingly!" The Anonymous Angelic describes the vision in these terms: "He got very sick. The glorious father and protector St. Paul appeared to him and warned him about the impending death. He received the news with great joy and exultation, and shared it with his spiritual children" (*Barnabite Documents*, 45).

Gabuzio, with his characteristic style, gives us a lengthier description. First of all, he tells us that the saint predicted that his death would occur on the eve of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Then he describes the last moments of the life of Anthony Mary: "He recounted to have had at that time many hard and troubled fights with the enemy of the human race, but that he had overcome them with God's help. During his sleep, by divine enlightenment, he had envisioned what

would happen to the whole Congregation, and St. Paul appeared to him in a vision imploring God not to take him from this life yet, so that he could be of greater benefit to the same Congregation; but since he had to die, St. Paul prayed to the other Apostles for him that he might go to heaven with them” (*Historia*, 72).

The Milanese lawyer Giuseppe Vaillati perceives in this apparition an indication of Anthony Mary’s great sanctity: “Let me observe again that, as proof of Zaccaria’s holiness, since in his life he had chosen as special protector the Apostle Paul, and as a subject of his instructions, homilies, etc., the same Apostle, he had the consolation to have the Apostle appear to him at the moment of his death, as reported by the majority of the writers who have talked about Zaccaria. This is why I deduce that, taking the fact as true, it matches so well with Zaccaria’s whole life, to appear that the fact in itself would be a most evident witness confirming his holiness. It would be, anyway, inconceivable for the Apostle to wish to appear to the dying and seal with the apparition the relationship of all the ideas which could be given about the history of the Servant of God’s life and virtues” (*Depositio*, 198). We can, then, consider this apparition as the seal with which the Apostle Paul sanctioned a life spent following in his footsteps and imitating his virtues.

4. Although Dead, He Still Speaks (Heb 11:4)

Even after his death, Zaccaria continued to teach his spiritual children about St. Paul. Gabuzio recorded a wonderful grace granted to Fr. Soresina: “One day, after the death of Anthony Mary, Fr. Soresina, overcome by laziness, or tired from work, postponed the confession of a sick person. The following night, before falling asleep, he clearly heard Zaccaria’s voice: ‘Sir Battista, my good brother, where is the love taught to us by our Paul? Why did you neglect that soul?’ Having said this, he disappeared leaving him astonished and confused by the

shame of the neglected duty; it made him more diligent in the future” (*Historia*, 76).

5. Similarity of Character

Various authors have pointed out many similarities of character between St. Paul and Zaccaria. Father Motta noted, “Both energetic and vibrant souls have the same love for God and for souls, aroused by the bloody reality of the Crucified Christ, who enlightens and directs the action of them both. They have the same tendency for action as to an irresistible need to expand, to the austerity of life as a means of self-control which, while saving them from illusions, would make possible in them the radiation of the spirit; to the same constancy in pain, and to the same humility in success, which explains the grandeur of their vast apostolic activity” (*Cor Antonii, cor Pauli, Eco dei Barnabiti*, 1959, 39).

Father Bonini reflected on certain aspects of the Apostle’s personality that were particularly attractive to Anthony Mary: “Zaccaria found in Paul some consonance also in the character. He must have been fascinated by the Apostle’s qualities of decisiveness and resoluteness, the opposition to any form of compromise, the fight against lukewarmness, the laying down of his life without reserve, the mixture of tenderness and firmness toward his own, to have decided once and for all for Christ. And he saw these qualities realized in the marriage between sleepless activity and interior life in Christ, between theology and mysticism, between action and prayer” (*Alla scuola di San Paolo*, 71).

II. Saint Paul in the Writings of Anthony Mary Zaccaria

I have already treated this subject in *Handbook for the Spirit*, published in 1994. As I make reference to that study, I will expand on this subject, taking into consideration the contributions of other authors.

1. Preamble

In his writings, Zaccaria identifies himself as “priest of Paul the Apostle” (Letter VII); he calls the Angelics “daughters of Paul the Apostle” (Letter V) and the Barnabites “children of Paul the Apostle” (Letter VII), “children of Paul the Saint” (Letter X), and “children and stock of Paul” (Letter VII). Paul is the foundation for the apostolate entrusted to Zaccaria’s children: “You will build, on the foundation of Paul, structures neither of hay nor of wood, but of gold and of precious stones” (Letter VI). Indeed, Paul was their ideal of life: if they did not “busy themselves in denying their will...it would pull them completely out of the desire and life of Paul” (Letter IX).

2. Pauline Titles

The holy founder refers to Paul with the following titles: “divine Paul,” “father” (Letter V); “divine father,” “sweet father,” “saintly father” (Letter VII); “chaste Paul,” “learned Paul” (Letter IX); “true friend of God” (Sermon III); “our most holy leader and patron, most wise doctor of the Gentiles, leader and father” (Sermon VII); “apostle par excellence” (passim). We should note that the title “divine,” which has been the cause of so much suspicion directed at the Barnabites and Angelics, and which was used also in reference to living individuals, has traditionally been applied to St. Paul. The Oriental tradition often refers to him as the “divine apostle.”

3. Pauline Quotations

3.1. Number of Quotations

Previously, according to the concordance published by Fr. Giuseppe Cagni in 1960, we counted about ninety Pauline quotations in the writings of St. Anthony Mary. But now we have a more thorough study conducted by Fr. Giovanni Rizzi, who found over 1,797 Pauline references (*Corpus Paulinum* and the Acts of

the Apostles); over 834 references to the New Testament; and 1,371 references to all of Holy Scripture. Father Rizzi thus demonstrated the clear predominance of Pauline references. With good reason, then, can Fr. Rizzi affirm that “the Zaccarian language is, first of all, Pauline and then evangelical.” Out of curiosity, I reviewed the Pauline quotations in Zaccaria’s writings and discounted those which are not clear, direct references to the Apostle. I can affirm that the passages from Paul’s books (including the letter to the Hebrews) referenced by Zaccaria in his writings (excluding Sermon VII) number 293 in the Letters, 26 in the Sermons, and none in the Constitutions (which is surprising considering their literary style). These quotations are easily recognizable because they are typically introduced by the expression “Paul says” or something similar. Of the 26 references in the Sermons, eight are from the Latin text; eleven are from an Italian translation (usually a loose translation, especially in paraphrases); and seven are *conflatae* quotations, that is, the Latin text, the Italian translation, and some personal additions are mixed together.

3.2. The Method of Quoting

In his research report, Fr. Motta relates a fascinating observation: “The quotations from St. Paul, with which especially the Sermons are filled, are far from being exact: at least a word must be changed; perhaps just one, but there must always be a divergence from the canonical text. This shows that this was all material he had assimilated, and so he was quoting by heart. Moreover, in the original text of the Sermons, the Pauline quotations are never reported in full; but, after one or two words, a quick ‘etc.’ implies the rest, which supports what was said before that he used to quote by heart, since the familiarity with the sacred text was making the book useless.” In his most recent study, Fr. Rizzi confirmed these findings. The fifty-nine quotations are given mostly by heart, with the beginning or a

few words from the original text, followed by a meaningful “etc.” In many cases there is the mingling of two or more biblical texts, with substantial changes in some cases, and most of the time with stylistic and contextual adaptations. This is why the number of strict quotations taken from the Latin text of Scripture can be reduced to very few.

3.3. Source of the Quotations

The following question has been raised more than once: Which Latin version of the Bible was the holy founder using? Father Rizzi observed that in Zaccaria’s writings the quotations come from the *Vulgata* and the *Vetus Latina*. Most likely, Anthony Mary did not possess a single complete text of the Bible. From what we have read in various authoritative reports, we can confidently deduce that he had at his disposal a collection of the epistles of St. Paul, probably in the *Vulgata* text. As asserted by Fr. Motta and Fr. Rizzi, it seems that, for both the *Corpus Paulinum* and the other books of the Bible, the saint’s principal source for biblical quotations was his memory—he recalled passages from various biblical texts or from the works of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, which he read during his formation and which he continued to consult.

3.4. Purpose of the Quotations

As mentioned above, Zaccaria’s Pauline quotations are usually introduced by the expression “Paul says” or the like. This expression, besides being an introduction, gives to the quoted passage a certain solemnity and emphasizes Paul’s didactic role as master of the Zaccarian family. Father Motta has already pointed this out: “Paul is the ‘master’ par excellence, whose authoritative word is always side by side with that of the highest Master, Jesus.” Equally valid is the following observation: “The apodictic proofs, reported always after the other scriptural proofs, are always obtained from Paul.” In

Handbook for the Spirit, I demonstrated that Paul is master not only in his teaching but also in his example. One quotation is enough: “Paul never wanted to tell an untruth, although he could have gained the whole world, and gained for Christ” (Sermon II).

4. Pauline Doctrine

Zaccaria takes from St. Paul not merely certain sentences but rather a large portion of the doctrine contained in his writings. Here we cannot exhaust this subject, which actually is still in need of further study. Instead, we will offer a few points that demonstrate how Paul was the source of our holy founder’s thought. Father Ghilardotti, drawing from his thesis, gives the following summary of the “Gospel interpreted by Paul” and announced by Anthony Mary:

- Jesus Christ, Incarnate Word;
- the symbolism of the two men [the interior man and the exterior man];
- the Pauline *metanoia* or renewal;
- the theory of God’s two books;
- man, arbiter of his own destiny;
- contrast between the Old and the New Testament;
- social sense of charity and its dynamism.

Let us add some other elements, always of Pauline origin or at least somehow traced back to the Apostle. Zaccaria derives from Paul the *theology of the cross*, the defining characteristic of his spirituality. It is certainly the Pauline doctrine of the need for charity that develops in Sermon IV, and in Sermon I, IV, and VI we see Paul’s doctrines related to the mediation of man and to God’s creatures in general. Adapted from Paul is the doctrine of the “middle way,” which is based on 2 Cor 6:7-8: “Wielding the weapons of righteousness with right hand and left, whether honored or dishonored, spoken of well or ill” (see Sermon V, VI, VII). Even Zaccaria’s distinction between the

precepts and the counsels goes back to St. Paul. In order to overcome lukewarmness, one starts with the observance of the precepts and then gradually learns to follow the counsels (see Sermon VI). The concept of the “four kinds of prayer” also has a Pauline origin (see Constitutions, X). The terminology of “gain,” so widespread in Zaccaria’s writings, is again of Pauline origin. And we could mention many more examples. The next question is, Were these doctrines taken directly from St. Paul or were they filtered through intermediate authors? We will return to this later.

5. References to St. Paul’s Life

In Zaccaria’s writings we find many references not only to the letters of St. Paul but also to his life. I have found at least six. It will be adequate here to remember how Letter IX is modeled on the meeting in which Barnabas presented Paul to the Apostles (see Acts 9:26-27). This reminds us that the holy founder was familiar not only with the writings but also with the life of the Apostle. And thus we see, as asserted above, that Paul was master not only in his teaching but also in his example.

6. Comments on the Letters of St. Paul

The historians assure us that Zaccaria’s preaching was thoroughly Pauline. He frequently drew ideas and words from the Apostle, and we have already noted that the speech of October 4, 1534, was essentially an extended reflection on a Pauline text. The first part of Sermon IV is nothing more than a commentary—an excellent commentary—on the hymn of love on St. Paul.

7. Familiarity with the Apostle

The relationship between Zaccaria and Paul, as it emerges from the writings, is an extremely familiar one. Sometimes Anthony

Mary addresses the Apostle with the greatest of confidence: “Oh Paul, if your chains are so good, why do you want [Agrippa] to be a Christian without them?” (Sermon VI). Another text, which until now was thought to refer to Fra Battista, in my opinion was addressed to the Apostle: “Sweet Father, you have sweated and you have been sorrowful, and we shall receive the fruits; yours has been the cross, and ours shall be abundant rest; that is, carrying and embracing crosses continuously, we shall deliver your fruits as well as ours” (Letter VII).

The familiarity between Zaccaria and Paul is also expressed in the comparisons, sometimes quite bold, that he makes between his experiences and those of the Apostle. Consider, for example, the beginning of Letter V, where Anthony Mary expresses the desire to cause Paul to envy his daughters, the Angelics. Or let us recall the beautiful dialogue found in Letter X: “You, Dionysius, and you, Timothy and Titus, how were you acting with your Paul? You were not acting like this, but you, always aware of his presence, had deep love for your Father in your hearts, and you had no other intention but to please him. Alas, it is not the same with me!” (Letter X). The same living relationship between Paul and Zaccaria must exist also between the Apostle and the spiritual children of St. Anthony Mary. “Tell them, then, that this Paul preaches to them a Christ crucified in every way: crucified not only in himself but in them, too” (Letter IX).

8. Affinity for the Epistolary Style

Soresina and various historians who followed him noted an affinity for the epistolary style in the saint’s writings. Father Orazio Premoli affirms, “The letters of St. Anthony Mary testify, on their own, to the study he used to make of the Pauline epistles. In the greetings then, used to close, we can almost reread St. Paul” (*Storia dei Barnabiti del Cinquecento*, 52). In the introduction to the Bologna edition of the Sermons, Fr. Vittorio Michellini adds, “We could say

that what happened to St. Paul's style of life and apostolate happened to Anthony Mary's style. Both master and disciple are far from any literary purpose. The writings reveal an impromptu approach for the occasion, using the little free time available to jot down notes, write some letters, as the impelling spirit dictates, and so, at times, the thought becomes disorderly and obscure" (*Writings*, 64).

Even Fr. Bonini addressed this subject: "In the letters of the Founder even the tone conforms to that of the letters of Paul, from the initial greeting to the development of the theme, to the exhortative moment, to the final greetings. Evident in the two saints is the drive which urges them to write, that is, the exclusive desire 'to gain themselves and their neighbors,' whether they write to individuals or to the community. And the assimilation of Paul's spirit by Anthony Mary has been such that, although with a style which is his own, made of expressive urgency and familiar vocabulary, it is possible to catch echoes and reflections of Pauline expressions, if not a translation of Paul's phrase."

III. The Origins of the Zaccarian Paulism

A question raised by many authors, and one which we cannot avoid, is the following: Where did Zaccaria acquire his Paulism? Father Ghilardotti is confident in his answer: "At this point of our study we are able to say by now from where Zaccaria attained this Pauline imprint: from Evangelism [this movement, akin to Christian Humanism and *Devotio Moderna*, called for a return to the spirit of the Gospel]." Father Bonini is more cautious: "It would be exciting to know which ones were the external impulses which oriented Zaccaria toward the study and the love of St. Paul; but as we know, ours could be nothing else but pious desires." But after this general statement, he indicates a path for further research: "Although we do not know the modalities, he must have received a strong impulse from Fra Battista

Carioni da Crema, the Dominican who had a leading role in the spiritual life of the first three decades of sixteenth-century Lombardy and who was the spiritual director and inspirer of so many Zaccarian initiatives. Indeed, the experts on this Dominican are in agreement in affirming that among the sacred books he has a very clear preference for St. Paul, as the one whose thought is better in line with his character and ideals: spiritual battle, unrelenting fight against lukewarmness.”

I have previously warned against presenting Zaccaria as a “man of the Renaissance” and have expressed reservation about the tendency to interpret the life of our holy founder in the light of Christian Humanism, Evangelism, and *Devotio Moderna*. I suggested instead that we interpret Anthony Mary in the light of the patristic and scholastic traditions that were deeply instilled in him during his formation. I would like to propose a hypothesis in regards to the present question. I do not believe that Zaccaria’s interest in and love for St. Paul derived from his unconfirmed contact with certain groups from northern Europe. Rather, I think that his devotion to the Apostle derived from a “Pauline current” that has always been present in Christian spirituality. Conditioned as we are by the historiography of the Reformation, we have a tendency to think that Paul was forgotten after the death of St. Augustine and that Luther was needed to rediscover him. On the contrary, St. Paul remained present in various spiritual traditions and was especially influential with certain notable authors.

Father Bonini and, before him, Fr. Colciago very appropriately emphasized Fra Battista’s unquestionable influence on Anthony Mary. Now it was not by chance that Fra Battista had this Pauline vein: it is part of the Dominican tradition. It is enough to recall the descriptions of St. Dominic found in the *Libellus de Principiis Ordinis Praedicatorum*: “He constantly carried with himself the Gospel of St. Matthew and the letters of St. Paul, and meditated at length over these

last ones to the point that he knew them by heart.” And though the Dominican school certainly left its impression on Zaccaria, I think we should go further to reach that patristic—or better yet, monastic—tradition that the founder had gradually absorbed during his formation. He constantly drew sustenance from this for his spiritual life. To avoid making unsubstantiated affirmations, I will make reference to certain relevant sources. In the precious *Attestations* by Fr. Soresina, immediately after the passage reported above on Zaccaria’s devotion toward the Apostle, he writes, “Besides the doctrine of St. Paul, he put great emphasis on the *Collationes* and treatises by John Cassian. Hence, in his own conferences he utilized Cassian’s writings and had his listeners read passages from them which he commented on, so that everyone derived wonderful profit from this kind of exercise” (*Documents*, 68).

This field is still in need of thorough investigation. The thesis of Fr. Espen, for example, explores a patristic approach to the Sermons. I believe that Zaccaria’s dependence on the Fathers, and especially Cassian, needs further study that draws on all of the saint’s writings.

The works of Cassian, who has been described as “a disciple in the East and a master in the West,” are full of Pauline references. In the *Coenobite Institutions*, I counted 99 quotations from the Apostle among approximately 334 biblical quotations—almost a third of all the references were Pauline; in the *Collationes*, almost one quarter of the references are to St. Paul (363 Pauline quotations among approximately 1,465 scriptural quotations). The *Collationes* contain frequent references to Paul’s vocation; he is considered “the ancient ambidextrous doctor of the Gentiles,” “our centurion of the Gospel,” “the most valuable master of the Gentiles,” “the vessel of election through whom Christ spoke,” “the architect of spiritual artifacts.” Usually, he is designated as “the blessed Apostle.” In *Collatio IX* Cassian affirms, “One could not believe that the Holy

Spirit has said something through the mouth of St. Paul uselessly or without reason.” *Collatio XVII* offers a beautiful description of what we would call St. Paul’s diplomatic behavior, and *Collatio XXIII* is Pauline from beginning to end. It is no surprise that we find so many Pauline references in Cassian—though he was a follower of Origen and Evagrio Pontico, he was also a disciple of St. John Chrysostom, and it is well known that this extraordinary bishop of Constantinople was a great admirer of the Apostle Paul. When Cassian came out of Egypt in 399, where he had been in contact with the desert monks, he went to Constantinople and stayed there until 404, becoming a deacon under St. John Chrysostom. He thus had the opportunity to listen to the teachings of the great orator and to absorb his love for St. Paul. So, I propose the following thesis: since this author, whom Zaccaria knew so well (as witnessed by Fr. Soresina and by Anthony Mary himself in the Constitutions), exhibits such a widespread Paulism, it is natural to conclude that Zaccaria’s interest in and love for St. Paul the Apostle derived, to some degree, from reading Cassian. This issue is by no means insignificant because it influences the way we interpret Zaccaria’s writings. It is one thing to say that Zaccaria’s Paulism derived from Evangelism, a movement which, in the Humanistic and Renaissance spirit, returned to Paul while neglecting the intermediate tradition and thus was prone to subjectivism and “rupture.” It is quite another thing to affirm that Anthony Mary developed his Paulism from Cassian, from the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, or from his Dominican teachers—that is, from the living tradition of the Church. The distinction is crucial, for Paulism of this kind is not a novelty but an inheritance that is constantly being enriched. But at this point we must ask another question.

IV. Which Paul?

It is easy enough to talk about Paulism, but which Paul do we

mean? The Apostle was a man of complex and carefully interwoven characteristics. We can make reference to him from so many different perspectives—which ones was Anthony Mary familiar with? I believe the answer is simple: just about all of them.

1. The Theologian

We have already said that in his writings Anthony Mary looks at Paul as a teacher. If we look in Zaccaria for the great theological controversies present in Galatians and Romans, we will surely be disappointed. Anthony Mary was no Protestant “reformer,” and thus the Paul of our holy founder bore little relation to the so-called Paul favored by the likes of Luther and Calvin. Although not a professional theologian, Zaccaria clearly possessed a strong theological formation. It would be extremely interesting to study more deeply the theological presuppositions of the Zaccarian moral-spiritual doctrines. For example, no one has yet examined the theological motivations that underlay our founder’s fight against lukewarmness. Indeed, if we related these motivations to those that inspired Jesus’ conflict with the Pharisees or Paul’s polemic against those in favor of circumcision, we would surely discover that they are...the same! Another question deserving of theological investigation is the relationship between grace and free will. It would be interesting to compare Zaccaria’s position with that of Paul and Augustine on one side and that of Cassian and Fra Battista, both accused of Pelagianism, on the other.

2. The Apostle

Paul was not only a theologian; he was also, and especially, an apostle—the apostle par excellence. This is probably the reason why Anthony Mary chose him as his model and inspiration. He too wanted to be an apostle, and he wanted his disciples to be apostles. He said to the Barnabites, “Our vocation demands from us who have

started to follow, although from far away, the footsteps of the holy apostles, and of the other disciples of Christ, not to refuse to share in their sufferings, especially those trials which are by far lighter than theirs” (Gabuzio, *Historia*, 54). Speaking of the Angelics, he affirms, “My [daughters]—not one, but all of them—banishing any personal reputation and human satisfaction...wish to be apostles to eliminate not only idolatry and other major defects from the souls of people, but to destroy that most deadly and greatest enemy of Christ Crucified, which reigns in our modern times: I mean lukewarmness” (Letter V). Paul, for anyone who wants to be an apostle, must be the fundamental point of reference, since he was not only one of the Apostles but in certain ways the first among them: “He [Barnabas] presented him [Paul] to all the Christians as a column, and as if he was the prince of the Apostles” (Letter IX).

3. The Martyr

Paul sealed his theology and his apostolate with his own blood as he willingly gave up his life for Christ. This was not by mere chance but was the realization of a desire he had cherished for a long time: “The wise Paul...wanted to be, in actual life and in the opinion of all, a living example of Christ Crucified” (Letter IX). In this also the Barnabites wanted to imitate their master, and so they were called “Clerics Regular of St. Paul Decapitated.” Father Motta insists that Fr. Premoli was mistaken in affirming that the adjective “decapitated” was added only in 1552, since from January 1545 we find in the *Liber capitulorum* a mention of the “House of St. Paul Decapitated.” Later, the cult of the apostle-martyr was codified in the Constitutions of 1579. The title “Clerics Regular of St. Paul Decapitated,” Fr. Gabuzio explains, quoting almost verbatim from the Constitutions, “was kept for a long time, because those ancient Fathers thought to be doing according to their desires, that is, they tried to not only care for the

doctrine of the Apostle, but also to imitate his sufferings” (*Historia*, 95).

4. The Mystic

This last aspect of St. Paul—often neglected, and wrongly so—was actually the vital force that animated the theologian, the apostle, and the martyr. Paul could be who he was only because in his heart he was a mystic who cherished and nurtured his intimate relationship with God. Our Apostle joins the venerable list of Old Testament figures who confronted God during their earthly pilgrimage: Abraham, Moses, Elijah. It is not by chance that Zaccaria refers to Paul with the expression used by Scripture to designate Abraham: “That true friend of God, Paul, said about himself and other faithful ministers: ‘God has revealed to us things that no prince of this world, that is, no philosopher nor wise man of the world, has known’” (Sermon II). We find this affirmation in a particularly mystical context: Sermon III, in which Anthony Mary distinguishes between two levels of Christian life. One, to which all are called, is known as “justification” (a Pauline term), and then comes “perfection,” which is reserved only for the “friends” of God. “His bounty gives us, unfaithful and deceitful servants and His enemies, many gifts in spite of our negligence; nevertheless, He does not want to give to anyone but His friends and faithful disciples the gift of perfection, the taste of God, the knowledge of His secrets” (Sermon III). The model for these “friends,” to whom God reveals His secrets, is precisely Paul—he who encounters Christ on the road to Damascus, he who, caught up into paradise, heard words which cannot be uttered (2 Cor 12:4).

Conclusion: Anthony Mary, Alter Paulus

The foregoing discussion leads us to the conclusion that Anthony Mary Zaccaria can be considered an *alter Paulus*. We can

truly say that Anthony Mary made present to the sixteenth century, if not the person, certainly the spirit of St. Paul the Apostle. As the Book of Wisdom declares, “And she, who is one, can do all things, and renews everything while herself perduring; and passing into holy souls from age to age, she produces friends of God and prophets” (Ws 7:27). It is the same divine Wisdom, the same Holy Spirit, who age by age enters into the saints, bringing forth from His treasury of grace things new and old. Let us not doubt that the spirit of Paul, which was nothing else than the Spirit of God living in Paul, could return 1500 years later in the person of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria.

I believe that this vision of spiritual rebirth fulfills a need inherent in the economy of salvation: the apostolic charisms must somehow perpetuate themselves in the Church throughout its history. Just as Peter’s charism is perpetuated through the ministry of the Roman Pontiff, so the Pauline charism must remain present and active in God’s Church. This presence is manifested through the saints who embrace St. Paul’s spirit and encourage his virtues in others. Our founder is of course an eminent example, for he thoroughly and intensely identified himself with the Apostle. Zaccaria is no longer here on earth to make St. Paul present to the Church and to modern society, but his Pauline charism endures in his family of religious institutes. It is now our duty to make the spirit of the Apostle present to the modern world; his Paul, the Paul of Anthony Mary, has become our Paul. Are we ready to fulfill this vocation?

Are we really ready to be the new bearers of St. Paul’s charism? If this question refers to whether we carry within us the spirit of the Apostle, I believe we must answer in the affirmative. When I think of the number of apostolic activities carried out by the meager number of religious, when I think of the untiring labors of the Barnabites and Angelics of today, when I think of their constant readiness to serve the Lord, I cannot help but think that it is the spirit of Paul that drives

them—*caritas Christi urget nos* (2 Cor 5:14). If we, then, think of the missionary spirit that has always animated our Congregation, how can we not think that we continue to imitate our “divine father,” who in his zeal for the salvation of souls sacrificed so much to become all things to all men?

Nevertheless, we must reflect for a moment on the exterior forms of our Paulism. Father Bonini, at the week of spirituality in Lodi in 1980, made this observation: In a certain period of our history (as acknowledged by our historians), the ideal of Paul became weaker while greater emphasis was placed on the holy founder. Now, besides the good tradition of dedicating some of our churches to St. Paul and the various Pauline references in the Constitutions, what has happened to the Paulism of the early days? In reading Fr. Boffito, I have realized the outstanding accomplishments of many scholarly confreres in numerous fields of knowledge, but on St. Paul there is very little. In Rome we have, thanks be to God, a well-stocked library on St. Paul, but our Congregation, the first to be dedicated to St. Paul, has not yet produced a scholar on St. Paul.

I think that today we properly understand the balance between the leading role of the holy founder and the natural position of Paul in a congregation dedicated to him. In any event, our study of Zaccaria should lead us to this. Anthony Mary is by nature a son and disciple of Paul; to say “Zaccaria” is to make a reference to Paul. For Anthony Mary, following Christ meant walking also in the footsteps of the Apostle: we follow Christ, following Paul; we imitate Christ, imitating Paul. With much satisfaction, we can still describe the relationship between Zaccaria and Paul with the phrase “*cor Antonii, cor Pauli*,” and we can add to it “*cor autem Pauli, cor Christi*.” With these two phrases we have summarized our spirituality. As we turn to our founder, we find Paul. When we find Paul, we will have found Christ.

THE ZACCARIAN FAMILY

Clerics Regular of St. Paul

Angelic Sisters of St. Paul

Laity of St. Paul

CLERICS REGULAR OF ST. PAUL

“Let us run like madmen not only toward God but also toward our neighbors.”

(St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, Letter II)

The Clerics Regular of Saint Paul – are commonly called Barnabites from their first major Church in Milan, Italy, which was dedicated to Saint Barnabas.

The Barnabites – are Clerics Regular, that is, clerics doing any priestly work but living together under a special Rule, bound by solemn vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Saint Paul – is the patron saint of the Order, from whom the Barnabites draw inspiration in spreading the devotion to Christ Crucified and to the Holy Eucharist.

The Order was founded – almost 500 years ago by Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria (1502-1539), a learned and charitable medical doctor. Believing that souls were more in need of healing than bodies, he became a priest. Following the example – of their Holy Founder, every Barnabite adds the name Mary to his.

The Barnabite Order – consists of both priests and brothers. The Barnabites are in: Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Congo, India, Italy, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Rwanda, Spain, and the United States.

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ANGELIC SISTERS OF ST. PAUL

“Unfurl your flags, my dear daughters, for Jesus Crucified is about to send you to proclaim everywhere the vital energy of the Spirit.” (*St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, Letter V*)

The Angelic Sisters of Saint Paul – work in active apostolate as collaborators of the Clerics Regular of Saint Paul (Barnabites) and the Laity of Saint Paul in their mission of “renewing the Christian fervor” in the Church.

Saint Paul – is their protector and guide, after whom they model their life.

The Congregation was founded – in Milan, Italy, by the same founder as the Barnabites, Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria, and was granted the Pontifical Bull of approval on January 15, 1535.

The Congregation of the Angelic Sisters of Saint Paul – are inspired in their apostolic works by Mary, under the name, Mother of Divine Providence, who in her life has been a model of that motherly love, with which all who join in the Church’s apostolic mission for the regeneration of mankind should be animated.

The Angelic Sisters – serve in the Church in the following countries: Italy, Brazil, Belgium, Spain, United States, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo, Philippines, Portugal, Chile, Albania, Poland, Rwanda, and Indonesia.

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LAITY OF ST. PAUL

“I greatly desire that you become great saints, since you are well equipped to reach this goal, if you will it.”*(St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, Letter XI)*

The Laity of Saint Paul originated in the early 1500s by the initiative of Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria.

The brilliant and prophetic intuition of Anthony Mary was to understand that true holiness is achieved only with a deep “internal reform” that is required of all: priests, religious and lay people, especially married ones.

So it was that Anthony Mary Zaccaria gathered around him many married lay people, to make them grow in the knowledge of faith and in the love toward neighbors. His idea was that only through cooperation of the three states of life could the Church find the ferment of growth and renewal.

By 1986, some lay people came together and decided to submit to the Barnabite Fathers and the Angelic Sisters the project to rebuild this reality. The approval of the movement was slow and resulted in some difficulties, which were then overcome.

Today the Laity of St. Paul are a reality in many parts of Italy and abroad, and have a job-training program for its members. Their spiritual life is nourished by reading and meditating on the Scriptures, especially the letters of Saint Paul, and studying the writings of the holy founder.

Their main aim is the “internal reform,” that is, to win over “lukewarmness” which leads slowly into indifference and spiritual laziness. This internal reform is also to find the strength, passion, and enthusiasm of the true Faith understood as full trust in the Person of Jesus Christ.

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Barnabite Publications

Barnabite Publications commenced in 2007 with its first online publication of a newsletter entitled *Anthony Alive*. In the following years, Barnabite Publications has printed religious materials, such as brochures, pamphlets, cards, and has published translated foreign works for the use of English-speaking readers. Barnabite Publications continues to fulfill its aim of evangelization through publishing and printing materials that provide spiritual means for renewing Christian fervor in the world as envisioned by St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, founder of the Clerics Regular of St. Paul (Barnabites), Angelic Sisters of St. Paul, and the Laity of St. Paul.

Barnabite Publications depends mostly on generous donations for its publishing finances. It welcomes donations coursed through this address:

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Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria

Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria was born in Cremona, Italy in 1502. He was graduated from the University of Padua in 1524 with a degree in medicine. As he returned to Cremona, he soon realized that people, even though in need of a medical doctor, were more in need of a doctor of souls. It was in the church of St. Vitale that Anthony reformed and re-evangelized the people. In the meantime, he studied under the Dominicans and was ordained a priest on February 20, 1529. With the aid of his own spiritual director, he moved to heal the spiritual wounds in the Milan area. Anthony joined there the Oratory of Eternal Wisdom. The purpose of this prayer group was the interior renewal of self and others. Springing forth from the oratory, the *Clerics Regular of St. Paul (Barnabites)* were formed by Anthony. He also founded the *Angelic Sisters of St. Paul* for women and another group for the laity (*The Laity of St. Paul*). Together, these three groups went around the Milanese area healing the illness of spiritual ignorance, lukewarmness, and superstition. Those in authority, civil and Church, did not like them upsetting the status quo; nevertheless Anthony and his followers continued to preach with the healing power of the reformation based on the teachings of Jesus and the Letters of Saint Paul. Anthony died, surrounded by his family and confreres, in Cremona on July 5, 1539. He was named a saint by Pope Leo XIII on May 27, 1897.

The **Zaccarian Spirituality Collection** is an anthology of works on the life and teachings of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria written or compiled by recognized members of the Clerics Regular of St. Paul (Barnabites), the Angelic Sisters of St. Paul, and the Laity of St. Paul. The collection is meant to spread, promote, and renew the spirituality of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria in the English-speaking world.

*“Consider well what I have written to you and try
to practice it by deeds, not just by words.”*
(St. Anthony M. Zaccaria, Letter 3)



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2015